

December 7, 2010

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia: Mr. Speaker, S. 3998, the Criminal History Background Checks Pilot Extension Act of 2010, will extend the national child safety pilot program for an additional 12 months.

Many Americans across the country graciously give their time and energy to volunteer and mentor children. While most of these volunteers act with good intentions, it is important that we are able to identify those who may misuse these opportunities to harm children.

The national child safety pilot program was passed in 2003 as part of the PROTECT Act. This program assists organizations in checking the criminal records of volunteers before placing them as mentors with children.

Since 2003, the national child safety pilot project has enabled State governments to work with youth-serving organizations to access FBI's national fingerprint-based background checks system. The pilot program has helped prevent child predators and sex offenders from getting access to children through legitimate mentoring programs by providing access to the more comprehensive data in the FBI's database. We have authorized this noncontroversial fee-based program on three other occasions in anticipation of creating a permanent program. This pilot program has provided extremely important information to mentoring organizations--at no cost to taxpayers. We hope that this 12-month extension will give us more time to work with the Senate and the Department of Justice to permanently authorize this program.

I would like to thank the gentleman from California (Mr. *Schiff*) for his leadership in this legislation and his commitment to keeping children safe. I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.